

Claimed:

1. A system for mail processing, comprising:
 - a computer;
 - a hand-held imager connected to the computer, which imager can be used to transmit an image of a mail piece to the computer;
 - 5 means on the computer for determining address data from the signal received from the hand-held imager;
 - a label printer connected to the computer; and
 - means for causing the printer to print a postal bar code corresponding to an address identified by the means for determining address data.
2. A method for mail processing, comprising:
 - (a) manually positioning an imager relative to a mail piece so that the surface of the mail piece with address information thereon can be captured;
 - (b) then capturing the surface of a mail piece with address information thereon with
 - 5 the imager;
 - (c) using a computer to determine address data from the signal received from the imager and
 - (d) if an address is determined with sufficient specificity in step (c), taking an action in accordance with a postal processing scheme, which action is a first one of a series of
 - 10 events that will result in delivery of the mail piece to a destination point that corresponds to the captured address.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) comprises printing a postal bar code label for the mail piece, which bar code corresponds to an address identified by the computer and then applying the bar code label to the mail piece.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the steps of:
 - (e) if an address cannot be determined with sufficient specificity in step (c), assigning an identification code to the mail piece; and
 - (f) saving the image and identification code associated therewith in a computer accessible form for resolution at a later time.
- 5 5. The method of claim 4, further comprising a step (g) of labeling the mail piece with the identification code in a machine scannable form.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:
 - (h) feeding the labeled mail piece image into a video coding system;
 - (i) capturing and reading the identification code of the labeled mail piece;
 - (j) displaying the image associated with read identification code on a video screen;
 - 5 (k) manually entering address information associated with the displayed mail piece into a video coding computer; and
 - (l) applying a postal delivery bar code to the mail piece, which bar code corresponds to the address information entered into the video coding computer.
7. The method of claim 4, wherein the identification code is an existing feature that appears on the mail piece and can be identified by being captured and read.
8. The method of claim 2, wherein the imager is a hand-held capture device
9. The method of claim 2, wherein the imager is in a fixed position configured to capture articles under the imager, which is manually positioned by an operator.

10. A method of sorting a batch of mail pieces including:

sorting mail pieces from the batch using an automated sorting system that scans each mail piece and sorts it to a destination bin based on the results of the scan;

5 taking non-machinable mail pieces from the batch which cannot be sorted using the automated sorting system and:

(a) manually positioning an imager relative to each non-machinable mail piece so that the surface of the non-machinable mail piece with address information thereon can be captured;

10 (b) then capturing the surface of a non-machinable mail piece with address information thereon with the imager;

(c) using a computer to determine address data from the signal received from the imager; and

15 (d) if an address is determined with sufficient specificity in step (c), taking an action in accordance with a postal processing scheme, which action is a first one of a series of events that will result in delivery of the mail piece to a destination point that corresponds to the scanned address.

11. A method of processing a series of articles, comprising:

(a) manually positioning an imager relative to each article so that the surface of the article with information thereon can be captured;

5 (b) then capturing the surface of the article with information thereon with the imager;

(c) using a computer to determine selected data from the signal received from the imager;

(d) using a computer to correlate the data to elements of a corresponding database; and

10 (e) taking an action in accordance with a processing scheme based on the results of steps (a)-(d).

12. A method of sorting a series of mail pieces comprising:

(a) manually positioning an imager relative to each piece so that the surface of the mail piece with address information thereon can be captured;

5 (b) then capturing the surface of the mail piece with address information thereon with the imager;

(c) using a computer to determine address data from the signal received from the imager; and

10 (d) if an address is determined with sufficient specificity in step (c), taking an action in accordance with a postal processing scheme, which action is a first one of a series of events that will result in delivery of the mail piece to a destination point that corresponds to the scanned address.